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S E C R E T CAIRO 000017

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ELA AND NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/04/2019  
TAGS: [KPAL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: EGYPT: GAZA ROUND-UP: JANUARY 5

REF: A. CAIRO 0007  
[1](#)B. CAIRO 0003  
[1](#)C. CAIRO 0002

Classified By: Minister Counselor William R. Stewart  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Rafah  
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[1](#)1. (S) On January 5, Egyptian military officials briefed defense attaches on the situation in Gaza. The Egyptian military reports that the Egyptian-Gaza border remains stable, with no breaches since December 28. Egyptian border guards successfully prevented subsequent attempts to breach the border by a small number of unorganized individuals. Egyptian forces continue to receive occasional gunfire from the Gaza side of the border.

[1](#)2. (S) The Egyptian military estimates that Israeli air attacks have destroyed 50 percent of the main smuggling tunnels between Rafah and Gaza. They anticipate that the Israeli Defense Force will take additional measures to destroy the tunnels during the ground invasion. The Egyptian military stressed that the Rafah border would not be permanently opened until the Palestinian Authority regained control of the border crossings. They expressed concern that the Israelis were attempting to sever Gaza from the West Bank, leaving an independent Gaza as "Egypt,s problem.8

[1](#)3. (SBU) According to the Egyptian military, 325 tons of medical aid has been delivered to Gaza since December 28, including 60 tons donated by the GOE. Assistance is being delivered through Rafah, Kerem Shalom, and most recently al-Aouja (Egyptian-Israeli border crossing in Central Sinai) due to the high volumes of goods. All material is being thoroughly searched for weapons and ammunition.

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Demonstrations  
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[1](#)4. (SBU) Contacts told us that the police prevented the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) from holding a large demonstration planned for Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo on the afternoon of January 5; however, our contacts said the demonstration will be held elsewhere in the city either today or tomorrow. The police allowed the MB to lead a smaller demonstration at the Press Syndicate, not far from Tahrir Square, where approximately 400 people demonstrated as of 1430 hrs. local. Emboff observed a demonstration of about 200 people in front of the Mogamma (an enormous government building about half a kilometer from the embassy). The protestors were waving a Palestinian flag and chanting, "We are with you, Hamas!" There were at least 1500 police in full riot gear scattered throughout the public square in front of the Mogamma.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Contacts told us January 5 that about 17,000

demonstrated in a peaceful protest January in the Delta town of Tanta. Contacts remarked that police allowed the demonstrators to protest, and did not attack the crowd. The MB has claimed that it led demonstrations January 4 of at least 10,000 protestors each in the Delta town of Mansoura and in Fayoum (about 100 kilometers south of Cairo), and of 25,000 protestors in Alexandria.

SCOBAY